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To: <senvanwoerkom@senate.michigan.gov>, <SenGWhitmer@senate.michigan.gov>,
...
Date: 6/13/2007 10:21 AM
Subject: CAFO regulations

CC: <smontle@umflint.edu>, <heronoaks@centurytel.net>, <gayle.miller@sierrac...
In one of my past lives, I served as the (interim) Executive Director of the Flint River Watershed Coalition (FRWC) -- and I have several years of service on the Board of that organization. We do volunteer water testing twice a year at about 30 sites in various tributaries of the Flint River. In addition, we oversee and sponsor a student program with water testing at about 30 additional sites.

Testing has given me an understanding of water quality. We know that seepage from just one septic tank near a stream can have a significant impact on the water quality in that stream. Leakage from a broken sewer line can affect not only that stream -- but the streams/rivers into which it flows for many miles downstream from the leak. That is why we regulate human waste.

A single CAFO generates waste equivalent to that generated by an entire small city. Yet, the bills under consideration in the Senate Agricultural Committee would effectively de-regulate the minimal controls we already exercise over these corporate entities. It's unthinkable that we should do so!

The Great Lakes are the hub of much of our tourism industry, and they supply drinking water to much of the population of this state. Every stream, ditch, or catchbasin in Michigan is -- in fact -- a headwater of the Great Lakes. EVERYTHING that goes into those streams/ditches/catchbasins eventually gets to the Great Lakes -- diluted, of course --- but present. So every leak or overflow at a CAFO contributes to the ruination of not only the local waterway -- but ultimately to the Great Lakes.

The state should be tightening regulations on all waste that affects water quality anywhere in the state. That we are underfunded and understaffed in the DEQ is NOT an excuse for less regulation! That we should even think about penalizing people who report problems is outrageous.

I strongly urge you to oppose SB 501-504! They are bad for Michigan!

Sincerely,

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